

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
December 12, 2006

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, December 12, 2006 at 10:15 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

Present Thomas Owen, JoAnn Fisher, John Hermina.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES The minutes of the November meeting were accepted as written.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT Commissioners received copies of the Chairperson's Report (See attached).

Chairperson Owen also stated he expected to have a meeting with Delegate James from his county, who is on the Appropriations Committee, to enlist her support and to find out how MCHR can get access to the Governor's staff to get support for the increase in the agency's budget.

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that the Executive Director is on vacation and that the Deputy Director is sitting in for the Executive Director.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that Pamela Jenkins-Dobson, Supervisor, will be retiring effective December 30, 2006 and an investigator, Karen Koger, will also be resigning the end of the month.

Winterfest The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that the agency's Annual Winterfest will be held Friday, December 15, 2006. All Commissioners are invited to attend. There will be a Silent Auction and the proceeds will be donated to the House of Ruth.

Case Processing Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that at the end of this month MCHR will be half way through the contract year. MCHR is on track with both of the federal contracts.

The Deputy Director asked Chairperson Owen if the Program Director for Mediation could attend next month's meeting and the Chairperson agreed. The Director will conduct a brief overview of the mediation program and will also discuss her involvement in the Maryland Program for Mediator Excellence. The Mediation Director has been elected to chair the above-mentioned program.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Commissioners received copies of the agency's Monthly Budget Status Report (See attached). The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR's current budget year is proceedings on target.

FY 2008 Budget

The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that he had a conversation with the Budget Analyst to find out whether or not the Department of Budget & Management has finalized MCHR's appropriation budget for FY 2008. The analyst stated that he is finishing up and hopes to have something for MCHR by the end of the week.

The Assistant Director stated that he had a previous conversation with the Budget Analyst during which the analyst was speaking favorably about the budget at that point.

The budget request minus the unfunded request was approved. MCHR does not know how much of the unfunded request it will receive.

The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that Jay Sybert, Personnel Coordinator, resigned effective November 30, 2006. Mr. Sybert was with MCHR eight (8) years part-time. When Mr. Sybert came to MCHR he had retired from the state during the time when the state offered the early retirement incentive.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that MCHR received the new computer systems and they have been delivered to users. Laptops to be used by field office staff were also received.

Annual Report

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that the Annual Report has been sent to the printer.

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that he has created a database of everyone (12,000 people) who has ever contacted the Commission through email. All of these contacts will receive an email copy of the Annual Report. Chairperson Owen thanked everyone who was involved in completing the Annual Report. The Technology Manager stated that other people were involved in this matter also. The Technology Manager informed Commissioners that Bonnie Hernandez started the process and that Jeanne Weaver proof read the report.

GENERAL COUNSEL'S REPORT

Legislation

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached).

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that MCHR received a draft of the amendments to the Commercial Non-Discrimination bill. A bill will be submitted to amend the statute to make the procedures more specific.

The General Counsel, the original bill drafter and the President of the President's Round Table (CEO's and/or Executives of Minority Businesses) will meet to discuss strategic for the support of the amendments and to help provide a budget to properly fund the bill.

The General Counsel introduced Anand Parikh, new attorney. Mr. Parikh will assist in enforcing Article 49B labor and employment law.

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that she and the Training Specialist conducted a Hate Crimes Panel in Charles County. This was a joint panel with HUD, the FBI, the Department of Justice, the Sheriff's Department and the Department of Housing Development. The panel provided the community with assistance in directing them on what to do when and if they are subjected to a hate crime or hate incident.

OLD BUSINESS

Hispanic Study

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that he, as well as the Executive Director and Commissioner Gelman have been in touch with Dr. Schneider, from George Washington University. Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that committee members are working very hard in their respective counties to get support for legislation to provide funding for the Hispanic Study.

Chairpersson Owen informed Commissioners that Dr. Schneider is working hard and has obtained some money, a grant for \$5,000.00.

Vice-Chair Hermina thanked the Information Technology Manager for his work on the Annual Report. He also welcomed the new attorney.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 11:00.

Barbara Wilson